AN

# ELEGY

WRITTEN IN A

COUNTRY CHURCH YARD.

A NEW EDITION.

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# ADVERTISEMENT.

*THE following* POEM *came into my Hands by Accident, if the general Approbation with which this little Piece has been ſpread, may be called by ſo ſlight a Term as Accident. It is this Approbation which makes it unneceſſary for me to make any Apology but to the Author: As he cannot but feel ſome Satisfaction in having pleaſed ſo many Readers already, I flatter myſelf he will forgive my communicating that pleaſure to many more.*

The EDITOR.

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# ELEGY, &c.

THE Curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind ſlowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkneſs and to me.

Now

Now fades the glimm'ring landſcape on the ſight,
And all the air a ſolemn ſtillneſs holds;
Save where the beetle wheels his drony flight,
And drowſy tinklings lull the diſtant folds;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tow'r
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of ſuch, as wand'ring near her ſecret bow'r,
Moleſt her ancient, ſolitary reign.

Beneath thoſe rugged elms, that yew-tree's ſhade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude Forefathers of the hamlet ſleep.

The breezy call of incenſe-breathing Morn,
The ſwallow twitt'ring from the ſtraw-built ſhed,
The cock's ſhrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more ſhall rouſe them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth ſhall burn,
Or buſy houſewife ply her ev'ning care;
No children run to liſp their ſire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiſs to ſhare:

Oft did the harveſt to their ſickle yield,
Their furrow oft the ſtubborn glebe has broke;
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
How bow'd the woods beneath their ſturdy ſtroke!

Let not Ambition mock their uſeful toil,
Their homely joys and deſtiny obſcure;
Nor Grandeur hear with a diſdainful ſmile,
The ſhort and ſimple annals of the poor.

The boaſt of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike th' inevitable hour:
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye Proud, impute to Theſe the fault,
If Mem'ry o'er their Tomb no Trophies raiſe,
Where thro' the long-drawn iſle and fretted vault
The pealing anthem ſwells the note of praiſe.

Can ſtoried urn or animated buſt
Back to its manſion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honour's voice provoke the ſilent duſt,
Or Flatt'ry ſooth the dull cold ear of Death?

Perhaps in this neglected ſpot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celeſtial fire:
Hands, that the rod of empire might have ſway'd,
Or wak'd to extaſy the living lyre.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
Rich with the ſpoils of Time did ne'er unroll;
Chill Penury repreſs'd their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the ſoul.

Full many a gem of pureſt ray ſerene,
The dark, unfathom'd caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flow'r is born to bluſh unſeen,
And waſte its ſweetneſs on the deſert air.

Some village-Hampden, that with dauntleſs breaſt
The little Tyrant of his fields withſtood;
Some mute inglorious Milton here may reſt,
Some Cromwell guiltleſs of his country's blood.

Th' applauſe of liſt'ning ſenates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to deſpiſe,
To ſcatter plenty o'er a ſmiling land,
And read their hiſt'ry in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbad: nor circumſcrib'd alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confin'd;
Forbad to wade through ſlaughter to a throne,
And ſhut the gates of mercy on mankind.

The ſtruggling pangs of conſcious truth to hide,
To quench the bluſhes of ingenuous ſhame,
Or heap the ſhrine of Luxury and Pride
With incenſe kindled at the Muſe's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble ſtrife,
Their ſober wiſhes never learn'd to ſtray;
Along the cool ſequeſter'd vale of life
They kept the noiſeleſs tenor of their way.

Yet ev'n theſe bones from inſult to protect
Some frail memorial ſtill erected nigh,
With uncouth rhimes and ſhapeleſs ſculpture deck'd,
Implores the paſſing tribute of a ſigh.

Their name, their years, ſpelt by th' unletter'd Muſe,
The place of fame and elegy ſupply:
And many a holy text around ſhe ſtrews,
That teach the ruſtic moraliſt to die.

For who to dumb Forgetfulneſs a prey,
This pleaſing anxious being e'er reſign'd,
Left the warm precincts of the chearful day,
Nor caſt one longing ling'ring look behind?

On ſome fond breaſt the parting ſoul relies,
Some pious drops the cloſing eye requires:
Ev'n from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
Ev'n in our Aſhes live their wonted Fires.

For thee, who mindful of th' unhonour'd Dead
Doſt in theſe lines their artleſs tale relate;
If chance, by lonely Contemplation led,
Some kindred Spirit ſhall inquire thy fate,

Haply ſome hoary-headed Swain may ſay,
'Oft have we ſeen him at the peep of dawn
'Bruſhing with haſty ſteps the dews away
'To meet the ſun upon the upland lawn.

'There

'There at the foot of yonder nodding beech
'That wreathes its old fantaſtic roots ſo high,
'His liſtleſs length at noon-tide would he ſtretch,
'And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

'Hard by yon wood, now ſmiling as in ſcorn,
'Mutt'ring his wayward fancies he would rove;
'Now drooping, woeful wan, like one forlorn,
'Or craz'd with care, or croſs'd in hopeleſs love.

'One morn I miſs'd him on the cuſtom'd hill,
'Along the heath and near his fav'rite tree:
'Another came; nor yet beſide the rill,
'Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he.

'The next with dirges due in ſad array [born,
'Slow through the church-way path we ſaw him
'Approach and read (for thou can'ſt read) the lay,
'Grav'd on the ſtone beneath yon aged thorn.

THE

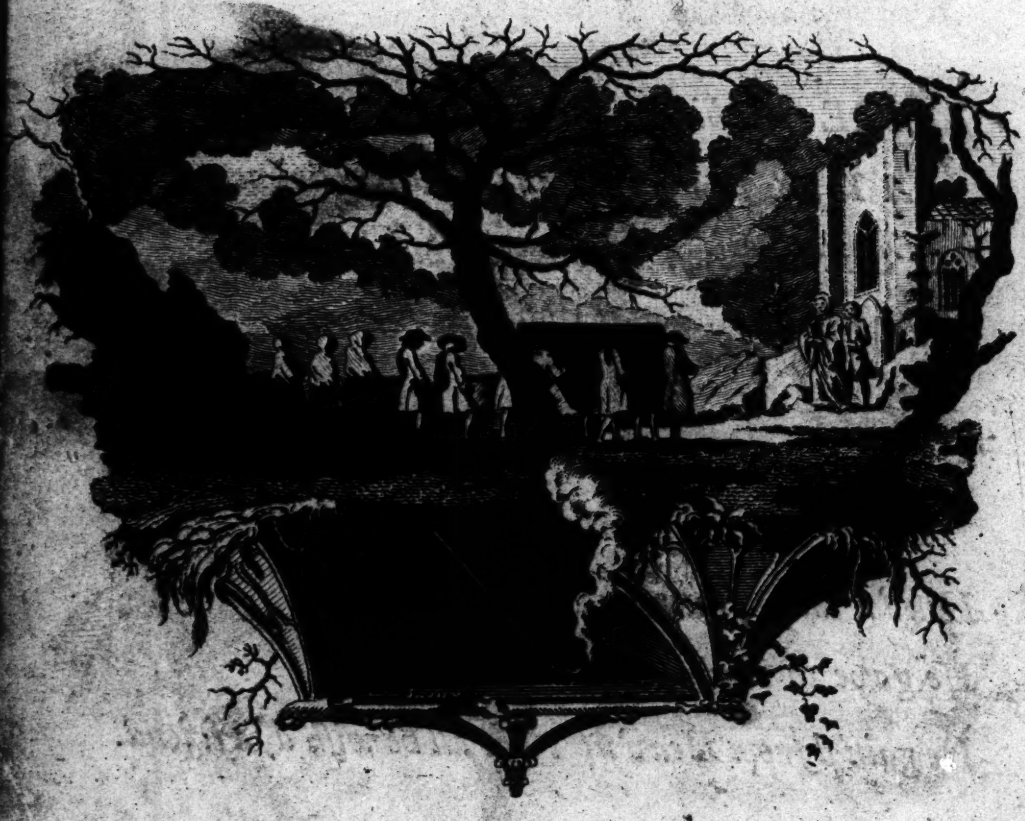
# EPITAPH.

*HERE rests his head upon the lap of Earth*
*A Youth to Fortune and to Fame unknown,*
*Fair Science frown'd not on his humble birth,*
*And Melancholy mark'd him for her own.*

*Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,*
*Heav'n did a recompence as largely send:*
*He gave to Mis'ry all he had, a tear,*
*He gain'd from Heav'n ('twas all he wish'd) a friend.*

*No farther ſeek his merits to diſcloſe,*
*Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,*
*(There they alike in trembling hope repoſe)*
*The boſom of his Father and his God.*

FINIS.



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